

REMARKS

Claims 11-14, 16-21 and 23-36 remain pending in the application, with claims 11, 17, 23 and 25 being the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, objection was made to claim 12 based on a certain informality, and the Examiner suggested certain specific corrections. In response, Applicants has amended claim 12 by adopting one of the Examiner's suggestions. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

In addition, claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for reciting "the input rules". In response, claim 25 has been amended above to correct this error, by replacing "the input rules" with "the input details", as suggested by the Examiner.

The above claim amendments correct the indicated informality in claim 12 and to provide the appropriate antecedent basis within claim 25, thereby placing such claims in better condition for appeal. Moreover, both amendments are believed to simply adopt the Examiner's suggestions and should require only cursory review by the Examiner. Accordingly, entry of the above amendments is believed proper and is respectfully requested in accordance with the provisions of MPEP § 714.13.

It is noted that objection also was made to claim 24 for allegedly failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. However, it is noted that independent claim 23 recites the feature that "the auction interface *permits* [emphasis added] an end-user of an online auction to select a feedback from a pre-defined list of feedback rules to use for the online auction." Dependent claim 24 then adds the additional feature that "the auction program *is further adapted to* [emphasis added] select a feedback from a pre-defined list of feedback rules based on auction

details provided by the end-user.” Nothing in either claim indicates that the recited feature is mandatory, but rather that it is merely available. Having both of these features available simultaneously is not contradictory. Moreover, the addition of the feature recited in claim 24 clearly further limits the recited subject matter of independent claim 23. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Finally, claim 31 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because the term “variable” as used therein allegedly is indefinite. However, the term “variable” is being used in its common and ordinary sense of a placeholder that can take on different values, such as variables X and K, described in the Specification at paragraphs [0018]-[0022], with X of course being the paradigmatic and most commonly used variable. Accordingly, it is believed that one of ordinary skill in the art would have known what the term “variable” means within the context of claim 31 and the overall Specification, and withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of the currently submitted papers that have not been accounted for in this paper or the accompanying papers, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 08-2025. If an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is required for the filing of any of the currently submitted papers and is not accounted for in this paper or the accompanying papers, such an extension is requested and the fee (or any underpayment thereof) should also be charged to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,
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